

Amendment to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1 – 9 (Withdrawn)

Claim 10 (Original): An article having reduced break-out force and reduced sliding frictional force comprising one or more surfaces and a lubricant applied to at least one of the surfaces, the lubricant-coated surface subsequently exposed to an energy source at about atmospheric pressure.

Claim 11 (Amended): The article of claim 10 wherein the lubricant is mixed with a solvent to form a lubricant-solvent solution prior to applying the lubricant to the surface, ~~the weight percent lubricant in the lubricant-solvent solution ranging from about 0.1 to about 95, in addition ranging from about 1 to about 50, and further in addition ranging from about 1 to about 10.~~

Claim 12 (Amended): The article of claim 10 wherein the coated surface is ~~heated, heated to evaporate the solvent in the lubricant-solvent solution at a temperature ranging from about ambient to about 150°C, in addition ranging from about 80°C to about 130°C, for a period of time ranging from about 0.5 minute to about 60 minutes, in addition ranging from about 0.5 minute to about 40 minutes, and further in addition ranging from about 0.5 minute to about 30 minutes;~~ the heating step occurring after applying the lubricant-solvent solution to the surface and prior to exposing the coated surface to the energy source.

Claim 13 (Amended): The article of claim 10 wherein the lubricant is selected from one or more groups comprising a fluorochemical compound, a perfluoropolyether compound, a functionalized perfluoropolyether compound, and a ~~polysiloxane-based compound mixtures thereof.~~

Claim 14 (Amended): The article of claim 10 wherein the lubricant contains additives selected from one or more groups comprising free radical initiators, viscosity modifiers, thickening agents, surfactants, wetting agents, anticorrosive agents, rust inhibiting agents, antioxidants, antacids, antiwear agents, buffering agents, ~~and~~ dyes, and mixtures thereof.

Claim 15 (Original): The article of claim 10 wherein the energy source is an ionizing gas plasma.

Claim 16 (Original): The article of claim 10 wherein the energy source is ionizing radiation.

Claim 17 (Amended): The article of claim 15 wherein the gas is selected from one or more groups comprising helium, neon, argon, krypton, air, oxygen, carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, water vapor, nitrogen, ~~and~~ hydrogen, and mixtures thereof.

Claim 18 (Original): The article of claim 10 wherein the surface is additionally exposed to the ionizing gas plasma prior to applying the lubricant.

Claims 19 – 24 (Withdrawn)

Claim 25 (Original): An article having reduced break-out force and reduced sliding frictional force comprising one or more surfaces, at least one of the surfaces exposed to an ionizing gas plasma at about atmospheric pressure and a lubricant applied to the plasma-treated surface to form a coated surface.

Claim 26 (Amended): The article of claim 25 wherein the gas is selected from one or more groups comprising helium, neon, argon, krypton, air, oxygen, carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, water vapor, nitrogen, ~~and~~ hydrogen, and mixtures thereof.

Claim 27 (Amended): The article of claim 25 wherein the lubricant is mixed with a solvent to form a lubricant-solvent solution prior to applying the lubricant to the surface, ~~the weight percent~~

~~lubricant in the lubricant-solvent solution ranging from about 0.1 to about 95, in addition ranging from about 1 to about 50, and further in addition ranging from about 1 to about 10.~~

Claim 28 (Amended): The article of claim 27 wherein the coated surface is heated, heated to evaporate the solvent in the lubricant-solvent solution at a temperature ranging from about ambient to about 150°C, in addition ranging from about 80°C to about 130°C, for a period of time ranging from about 0.5 minute to about 60 minutes, in addition ranging from about 0.5 minute to about 40 minutes, and further in addition ranging from about 0.5 minute to about 30 minutes; the heating step occurring after applying the lubricant-solvent solution to the surface and prior to exposing the coated surface to the energy source.

Claim 29 (Amended): The article of claim 25 wherein the lubricant is selected from one or more groups comprising a fluorochemical compound, a perfluoropolyether compound, a functionalized perfluoropolyether compound, and a ~~polysiloxane-based compound~~ mixtures thereof.

Claim 30 (Amended): The article of claim 25 wherein the lubricant contains additives selected from one or more groups comprising free radical initiators, viscosity modifiers, thickening agents, surfactants, wetting agents, anticorrosive agents, rust inhibiting agents, antioxidants, antacids, antiwear agents, buffering agents, ~~and dyes, and mixtures thereof~~.

Claim 31 (Cancelled)